

Lesson Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Lesson ID: 01684-23077

Title: CROWD/RIOT CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Operation/Exercise Name: UPHOLD DEMOCRACY

Observed: 20 Sep 1994

Originator: 2/2 S-3 OPSO

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5. (U) OBSERVATION:

On two occasions large crowds of Haitians became unruly and out of control while waiting at food distribution sites. Marines on the scene acting as security, lost control and were unable to maintain control due to a deficiency in planning.

6. (U) DISCUSSION:

When the Battalion Landing Team (BLT) embarked onboard ships, we began an aggressive training plan that focused on skills inherent to low intensity conflicts. One such skill was crowd/riot control procedures. Many hours in preparation were spent by our Marines conducting riot formation drills on the flight deck and pier side at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Their efforts paid big dividends in Cap Haitien when confronting large crowds of curiosity seekers or those participating in friendly demonstrations. Nevertheless, training in basic riot control formations is not enough. In anticipation of potential hostile events, we need to develop deliberate and detailed plans that take into consideration the safety of both Marines and local citizens. Issues like how to control the crowd should it panic; key entry and exit control points at distribution sites; use of AAVs or LAVs as barriers; use of engineer tape vice tactical wire for directional control; when should RCAs or pepper gas be employed, and a host of other issues must be considered.

7. (U) LESSON LEARNED:

Planning must be thorough and detailed as time permits. Staffs need to focus on worst case scenarios and viable courses of action that will address the situation.

8. (U) RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Many lessons learned from major metropolitan police organizations during the late 60's and 70's have been extensively documented on crowd/riot control procedures. This documentation can be acquired from such organizations as police academies or local universities/colleges who offer courses in criminal justice.

9. (U) COMMENTS:

None.

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